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**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION MEETING**

**July Meeting.** The Environmental Protection Commission met on July 18, 2017, in Des Moines.

**Division Administrator Comments.** Division Administrator Bill Ehm explained that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Iowa Finance Authority have announced that 32 Iowa communities received low-interest water quality loans totaling more than \$78.1 million from the State Revolving Fund. These loans are used for the planning and design or the construction of a wastewater treatment facility.

**Director's Comments.** Director Chuck Gipp explained that eight people were laid off on July 5, 2017, due to a \$1.6 million reduction of the FY 2018 General Fund appropriation for the operations of the DNR. In addition to the General Fund appropriation decrease, the DNR will also have increased expenditures for salary adjustments. The reduction of staff included the following:

- The State Forester position and the Forestry Bureau were eliminated. The employees who work in field offices will be transferred to the Wildlife Bureau, and the State forests and related employees will be transferred to the Parks Bureau.
- The State Geologist position was eliminated, and the DNR will contract with the University of Iowa for geological services.
- The AmeriCorps Volunteer Coordinator position was eliminated. AmeriCorps is a federal program that is not included in President Trump's proposed federal budget.
- Other positions eliminated included the Animal Feeding Operations Coordinator, the Safety Manager, the Art Director of the DNR magazine, and two positions assigned to recreational trails.

**Manure Management Plans.** The Commission approved the Notice of Intended Action for an administrative rule that allows a producer or landowner to submit a manure management plan electronically to the DNR or to the county in which an animal feeding operation is located.

**Extended Contract.** The Commission approved the extension of a contract between the DNR and the Division of Soil and Water Quality in the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to support the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Project. The contract was extended for one year, and an additional \$70,000 was awarded to pay for watershed staff salaries, administrative expenditures, and the installation of water quality practices.

**Derelict Building Grants.** The Commission approved 19 projects to receive grant funding totaling \$400,000 from the Derelict Building Grant Program. This program provides funding to towns with a population of 5,000 or less that have abandoned buildings that need to be updated or removed. Seven projects received more than \$25,000 and required the approval of the Commission. These included the following:

- Ackley will deconstruct an old grain elevator. The grant awarded was \$50,000, and the total project cost is \$185,250.
- La Porte City will deconstruct a building that will be used as a community center. The grant awarded was \$31,600, and the total project cost is \$52,320.
- Letts will deconstruct an old bank building and create a green space for community use. The grant awarded was \$37,500, and the total project cost is \$100,000.
- Lockridge will partially deconstruct an old building and create six new living spaces for senior citizens and disabled persons. The grant awarded was \$50,000, and the total project cost is \$202,000.
- Middletown will remove asbestos from a vacant school building. The grant was \$35,000, and the total project cost is \$60,000.
- Osceola will deconstruct a building and is in negotiations to lease it to the Veterans' Affairs Office. The grant awarded was \$60,000, and the total project cost is \$99,000.

- Tabor will deconstruct a vacant building and build a new city library. The grant awarded was \$27,000, and the total project cost is \$53,000.

**August Meeting.** The Commission will meet on August 15, 2017, in Windsor Heights.

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